



# Foundation Document Overview

## Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

Alaska



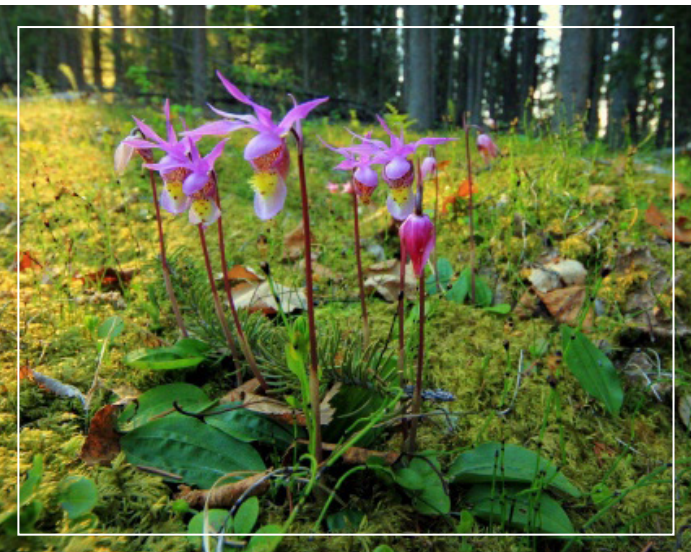
### Contact Information

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## Purpose



*The purpose of YUKON-CHARLEY RIVERS NATIONAL PRESERVE is to protect the environmental integrity of the undeveloped Charley River basin, and to protect the natural and cultural history of the upper Yukon River corridor for public enjoyment and scientific study.*



## Significance and Fundamental Resources and Values

**Significance statements** express why Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

**Fundamental resources and values** are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

**Charley River:** Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve protects the environmental integrity of the Charley River, the only designated Wild River to have its watershed protected in its entirety.

- **Watershed**
- **Scientific Study**
- **Wildlife Populations**
- **Charley River Recreation**



# Fundamental Resources and Values

**Plant and Wildlife Habitat:** Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve protects endemic plant species, fire-driven boreal forests, and species of management concern while offering extraordinary opportunities for scientific research.

- Unique Plant Communities
- Peregrine Falcons
- Predator – Prey Relationships
- Unaltered Ecosystems
- Partnerships
- Fire Ecosystems

**Geology and Paleontology:** Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is one of the few locations in the world where over 600 million years of the earth's geological history is recorded in an uninterrupted sequence of rock and sediment.

- Geologic Processes
- Paleontology
- Sedimentary Rock
- Research and Education



**History and Archeology:** Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve protects and interprets a rich historical, archeological, and ethnographic record of changing lifeways in the upper Yukon River basin.

- Gold Mining History
- Exploration and Settlement
- Prehistoric Archaeology
- Museum Collections

**Human Use:** Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve provides for human use and enjoyment of an historic and natural landscape.

- Spell of the Yukon
- Yukon River Travelers
- Subsistence
- Sport Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing



# Description

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve was established on December 2, 1980, under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), to maintain the environmental integrity of the entire Charley River basin; to protect habitat for, and populations of, fish and wildlife; and to protect and interpret historical sites and events associated with the gold rush on the Yukon River and the geological and paleontological history and cultural prehistory of the area.

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is one of the few locations in the world where an important span of the earth's geologic history related to the evolution of early organisms is recorded in an uninterrupted sequence of fossil-bearing sedimentary rocks dating from 620 million to 70 million years ago. It is an area of unglaciated valleys where remnant vegetation species are found and where many of the questions about early populations in Alaska might be answered. It contains examples of nearly all of the common landforms and plant and animal communities of interior Alaska; high-mountain ice fields feed cirque lakes; rivers plunge down mountainsides and twist through wide rolling valleys; and the resident wildlife include healthy populations of Dall sheep, caribou, moose, and grizzly, and one of the largest breeding population of peregrine falcons in North America. Cultural resources, including the potential for evidence of early man and historic cabins and gold dredges that recall bygone eras of the fur trade and the Yukon gold rush are found throughout.

Located in Interior Alaska, Yukon-Charley Rivers offers exploration in a largely untouched landscape. Whether you float the mighty Yukon River or paddle the Charley River's whitewater, geology, cultural history, gold rush remnants, wildlife, and vast scenery will be a part of your experience. But, the strongest element will be solitude.

The Charley River is a cold, clear, intermediate free-flowing stream. Maximum stream flow occurs in late May and early June. The boating season usually begins in June, and there are generally sufficient flows to accommodate small boats through August.

During periods of low water, it may be necessary to drag or portage a raft or kayak over shallow riffles and exposed rocks or gravel bars. The Yukon River originates in the coastal mountains of Canada and flows 1,979 miles in a wide arc to the Bering Sea. The river flows northwest through Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve for 128 miles. The river is silt laden in summer due to glacial runoff, and it is completely clear in winter when glaciers are frozen.

Although there is no direct highway connection to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, visitors are able to access the preserve by either air travel from Fairbanks, Alaska or water or air travel from two small towns on the road system, near the preserve boundaries. From Eagle, visitors can enjoy a leisurely float down the majestic Yukon River to access the preserve. Visitors arriving in Circle can gain access to the preserve by motoring 14 miles up the Yukon River in a powerboat. Another option is to charter an air taxi from Fairbanks or Tok and fly into the headwaters of the Charley River to challenge yourself on the rapids of this National Wild River.

